

This is the first of our quarterly newsletters for the 2009-10 school year. This is the only one that will be mailed. Please visit our new website for future Bulletin Boards. www.millburn24.net

The Scoop...

...August 2009

Dear District 24 Families,

Welcome back to Millburn! I have been excited to see so many of you over the summer and to get a chance to meet some students, staff, and community members. I am already so amazed at the warmth and caring I have seen and the year is not even yet underway. The welcome and support I have received here really cemented my feelings of joy at returning to Lake County and, most importantly, working as part of a team for a quality school district that clearly cares so much for students. You, as parents, send your children so well-prepared that we can get right to the academics and know that there is strong support from home. We thank you for that.

In my "welcome back" letters, I usually like to give a little update of any changes that have happened over the summer. You may want to be aware of the following:

- Our quarterly newsletters will be done through our brand new website after this mailing. This will be the last mailed newsletter. After this, we will send a postcard reminder when the next quarterly newsletter is posted. We are discontinuing the school's monthly newsletters and replacing them with weekly newsletters and virtual backpacks. Your building principal will have more information for you as to how this will take place. We are very excited to increase our communication with families and "go green" at the same time!
- To fill Gary White's retirement vacancy as our accountant, the BOE hired a business manager, Mrs. Mary Taylor, in July based upon the recommendations of the Financial Advisory Committee. Mary has been a welcome addition and has already found some ways for us to be even more fiscally responsible with taxpayer dollars. I think you will enjoy meeting her.
- The BOE approved the recommendations from the Financial Advisory Committee for increasing activity fees to \$75. That means that the 6th grade sports and the jazz band were able to be added back into the budget and it is cost-neutral to the district.
- With some of the released staff members finding employment in other districts or being able to be hired back at Millburn due to some unexpected leave of absence requests, the money we slated for unemployment costs was reduced. That meant we were able to put some of those savings toward hiring one full-time traveler to take the overload at both schools so that class sizes for reading and math are not large and allow for better leveling (6th grade at West and 7th grade at Central).
- The BOE approved some rental fee rates for our facilities. Although this will not make us rich, it will help to offset some of our utility costs. Again, the recommendations from our Financial Advisory Committee were so very helpful.
- For the 2008 year, we are considered to be on the Financial Watch list through the state of Illinois. Hopefully, by running a balanced budget this

year, we can improve our status and ranking. We know that it has not been easy to live through the cuts last year, but thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through this together. More information about these financial rankings may be found on <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/sfms/P/profile.htm> if you are interested.

- The Board of Education is taking advantage of a rebate opportunity on our 1999b series bonds. We are able to refinance and save taxpayers approximately \$118,000. This district is not allowed to receive this money; rather, it will be reflected on your tax bill in a year. Before you get too excited, keep in mind that when the amount is spread over the number of taxpayers we have, it is not even likely to add up to a cup of coffee. Still, though, it is important to note that your BOE is working for you to be sure that we do not miss any of these opportunities.
- We received good news from the state in that our ISAT scores have us at 94% meeting and exceeding in all areas, overall. Our next focus will be to see what we can do to get more kids from the "meets" to the "exceeds" categories. I fully look forward to working together in that endeavor and seeing the ways in which our staff can individually challenge each and every student to work past our expectations. I believe that there is no ceiling on a child's potential!

I hope that you will all feel free to come to me with any concerns, questions, or anything else about which you want to talk. I pride myself on being available and do not ever hesitate to email me at emaier@millburn24.net. My door is always open to you!! I hope this info has helped as we move into a new school year. I am really excited to start the year here. I look forward to seeing all of you. I'll see you soon! Again, thank you for all you do!

Your partner in education,

Dr. Ellen E. Mauer, Superintendent

Bits & Bytes from the Tech Team

Joanne Rathunde, Director of Technology

It has been a very busy summer in the technology department preparing for the 2009-10 school year. Improved communication district-wide was a main focus for summer projects. A new communications suite called FirstClass was installed and implemented late July. The FirstClass system is designed to enhance communication, collaboration, and learning within the Millburn education environments. We are excited about the opportunity to create collaborative online learning communities that will improve communication and collaboration between students, parents, teachers, and administrators. All facets of the Millburn learning community will be connected so that knowledge can be shared and learning opportunities maximized for all students. If you visit our website, millburn24.net, you will notice a link to the FirstClass integrated calendar system. You will be able to look at the District calendar as well as the calendar for each individual school. Any change made by building administrators will be immediately reflected in the online calendars.

Another major change you will notice is our new and improved website. This long awaited change will serve to improve and enhance

communication between home and school. The development of the site will be ongoing as we strive to meet the needs of all audiences. A direct result of this change will be less paper traveling between home and school. Virtual Backpacks will be available for each school so that parents can view and download files as needed. Handbooks and forms will be available online as well. A district-wide staff directory is a Quick Link on the home page where you can search by name and find position, email, and a link to individual teacher sites. We are very excited about our new look and hope you will find it informative and easy to navigate. We have great plans for more development, so we welcome suggestions and requests. Our goal is to build and maintain a site that accurately reflects Millburn District 24 and proudly represents the Millburn community at large.

Take some time to look at the Technology link on the Millburn website. We continually add educational sites for teachers and students. You will also find a scope and sequence of skills taught at each grade level as well as the long-range technology plan for the district.

Members of the technology team look forward to assisting the special services team as they embrace the opportunity to learn and implement assistive technologies acquired through government stimulus funds. Some of these same tools will be available to all students and teachers and we are eager to utilize our own resident experts to provide training and support for technology initiatives such as Smart Boards, podcasting, and website development.



Special Services Spotlight

Elizabeth Keefe, Director of Special Services

Millburn School District offers screening for preschoolers with *suspected developmental delays*. The screening is available to district three and four year olds and takes about one hour. The Early Childhood teachers and staff conduct the screenings. Developmental areas evaluated include speech and language, small and large motor skills, and pre-academic skills.

If the screening shows concern, arrangements will be made for future re-screening or for an in-depth evaluation. The next screenings will be held on the mornings of Friday August 21st and Monday August 24th, 2009, BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.

There are several screenings throughout the year. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call Sherri in the Special Services Department at (847) 245-2908.



Jason Lind, Principal

Dear Students and Parents of Millburn Central,

I hope you are all looking forward to another excellent school year! I am getting increasingly excited as teachers begin setting up their classes, the class lists are becoming finalized, and the hallways are becoming glossy with a new coat of wax. I love the excitement that each new school year brings!

In addition to an outstanding group of students, we are fortunate to have supportive parents and a brilliant group of teachers. When I am asked what makes Millburn special, my typical answer is, "It is the willingness and ability of our parents, students and teachers to work together in preparing our future leaders." The Millburn community is blessed with parents committed to preparing their students for school through academic enrichment, social instruction, and physical provisions. Students arrive at school ready to learn, and our excellent teachers are able to engage our young learners in the wonders of learning about our world.

I look forward to seeing all of you at our **Open House/Supply Drop-Off on August 20th**. We will open the doors for parents and students to visit their classrooms for a brief visit, and to allow students to drop their supplies in their lockers or rooms. This has greatly decreased some of the first day jitters, and it saves some room on the buses! The doors will be open from **4:30 until 6:00**.

A new school year has also brought about several changes of which you will need to be aware. I will highlight some of those changes.

Start/Dismissal Times Changed:

The start time for the K-4 students has been moved 5 minutes earlier and the 5-8 start time has been moved 5 minutes later. We did this in order to allow our bus drivers to have a little more wiggle room between the two routes. Our goal is to improve consistency with our pick-up times.

- 8:00- K AM-4 Students enter the building
- 8:10- K AM-4 Students are in their seat prepared for learning
- 8:40- 5-8 Students enter the building
- 8:50- 5-8 Students are in their seats prepared for learning
- 10:55- K AM Students dismissed
- 11:55- K PM Students enter the building
- 2:40- K PM-4 Students are dismissed
- 3:20- 5-8 Students are dismissed

CURRICULUM CORNER

From Dr. Cheryl Kucera



Welcome back! We have been planning throughout the summer for your return. The books and materials are all ready for the students. Teachers have been planning for the coming year, and so have we in the Curriculum Department. For all of us there are some new things to look forward to and adventures in learning to explore.

The Millburn District website (www.millburn24.net) has a new look. If you have a question about the curriculum, assessment, or textbooks, you should be able to find the answer by going to the website and clicking on *Curriculum* in the menu bar. Then, use the drop-down menu to view the sections we have worked on so far. Just remember that the website is still a work in progress. Should you not find the information you seek there, please contact Ms. Kramer, my secretary, (847-245-2920) who should be able to answer any questions you may have.

An important item in the drop-down menu is the information we have on the various assessments that are given in the district. If you do not find the answer to your question there, please contact me at 847-245-2898. I should be able to answer any questions you may have on MAP testing, curriculum, the state ISAT assessments, etc. Should you have questions about your child's assessment scores, I can help you with that as well. The offices of the Curriculum Department are located at Millburn Central within the front office complex.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Fall MAP Testing in Grades 2-8	September 13 – 25
ISAT Testing	March 2 – March 12
Spring MAP Testing in Grades 2-8	April 7 – April 20

The Mustang Express Has Changed:

The *Mustang Express* newsletter will no longer be called the *Mustang Express*, and it will be delivered through the new Millburn website. I will be communicating on a weekly basis through the *Mustang Minute*. The *Mustang Minute* will be a short update on the events of the week, and it will also contain other tidbits of information as needed. The website will also contain a weekly "backpack" of general informational items and flyers that were formerly distributed to each student. We will be asking you to rely heavily on accessing our website on a regular basis.

The Website Has Changed:

The technology department has been working very hard to create an entirely new website for the upcoming school year. The new website will be easier to navigate, and it will be the primary source of information for school to home communication.

I will make every effort to keep you informed of events throughout the year primarily through the school website. Please feel free to contact me at any time with any concerns you may have! I can be reached through email at jlind@millburn24.net, and by phone at (847) 245-2800.

Curriculum Nights Have Changed:

We will now attempt to have the three curriculum nights condensed into two nights. Curriculum night is a chance for parents to meet their child's teacher for a second time, and to be presented with an overview of curriculum for the upcoming year. Parents will also be informed of various grade level, and classroom procedures. The schedule will be as follows:

- 1-2 Grades- Wednesday, September 9, 6:00-7:00 PM
- 3-4 Grades- Wednesday, September 9, 7:00-8:00 PM
- 5-8 Grades- Thursday, September 10, 6:30-7:30 PM



Jake Jorgenson, Principal

Dear Parents and Students of Millburn West,

We are now looking at the start of our fifth year at Millburn West. Teachers are already spending many hours getting their classrooms decorated and organized for the new school year. The rest of this letter will inform you of topics such as changes for the upcoming year, crossing guards, supervision, supply drop off, and general school procedures. I am very excited about the upcoming school year at Millburn West. I can't wait to see all of you again soon.

Crossing Guards:

Below you will find a schedule that explains the locations and times of our crossing guard positions. I encourage families to review the route that you want your child to take to school and emphasize crossing at crosswalks with the crossing guard. The crossing guards are provided in order to help ensure that students have safe locations to cross streets on the way to and from school.

"Walking" Crossing Guard route:

- 7:48 a.m. – corner of Monroe and Adams Drive
- 7:52 a.m. – corner of Adams Drive and Penn Boulevard
- 7:54 a.m. – corner of Penn Boulevard and Hamilton
- 7:56 a.m. – intersection of Hamilton and Colony
- 7:58 a.m. – corner of Hamilton and Constitution
- 8:04 a.m. – corner of Independence and Franklin Lane

This guard will continue to escort the students around by the pond and onto school grounds by 8:10 a.m. The "walking" Crossing Guard will reverse this route beginning at 3:10 p.m. for the return home. The students will meet the guard at the same entrance they are dropped off in the morning (bike rack entrance).

Permanent Crossing Guards - from 8:00 a.m. and again at 3:00 p.m. There will be two permanent Crossing Guards stationed daily at the corners of Heritage Drive and Independence Boulevard and at Providence Lane and Independence Boulevard.

Start and End Times:

We are going to continue our single start time of 8:30 (including Middle School students) and dismissal time of 3:00 for all grade levels. There will be early supervision at the front canopy, the bike racks / or cafeteria, and at the playground starting at 8:00. Students will be allowed to enter the building when the bell rings at 8:20. Students are expected to be in their classroom and ready to start at 8:30. Students will be released from school at 3:00. I encourage all students to report home and contact parents directly after school. If you are interested in registering for extended supervision in the morning or afternoon please call the Afterschool Club program at their office in Grayslake (847-548-2445).

Remind students ahead of time that all wheeled vehicles need to be walked on school grounds. There are bike racks at the cafeteria entrance, the main entrance and we have added one to the east entrance. This should make it less congested and easier to get bikes in and out. Please lock bikes to bike racks. Skateboards, scooters, and rollerblades can be locked to bike racks or stored in lockers.

Supply Drop Off / PTO Ice Cream:

Millburn West will be open on August 20th from 4:30 to 6:00 for families to drop off supplies, meet teachers and have ice cream provided by the PTO. Please come and enjoy this kickoff to the school year. If your student walks to school, go over the route you want them to follow. If you are new to the district I would like to meet you. I look forward to seeing many of you on the 20th. You will find me by the ice cream!

The Cougar Express has changed:

Instead of sending home a monthly letter, I will be communicating on a weekly basis through the Cougar Catch. This is where you will "catch" the weekly news about Millburn West. It will be a short update on weekly events and will contain other news worthy information. We have been collecting parent email addresses and I anticipate sending the Cougar Catch via email. It will also contain a link to the school's new website where parents will find a virtual backpack. The backpack will contain typical Friday notes from the school or outside organizations. We will be asking you to rely heavily on accessing our website on a regular basis. You will also be able to easily view the calendar for important events, times, dates and locations from our website at www.millburn24.net.

I look forward to the start of Millburn West's 5th year of operation. We are busy preparing the building for the students. The teachers and the rest of the staff are looking forward to the first day of school. If you have questions, need information or are interested in being a crossing guard or alternate crossing guard, please contact me via email at jjorgenson@millburn24.net or by phone at 847-245-1600. Enjoy the last couple weeks of the summer and look forward to start of a new school year.

Some District News You Should Know

Lunch Prices Have Changed:

Lunch Prices have been increased from \$2.00 to \$2.50. These prices have been increased to more closely reflect the actual cost. The first hot lunch will be served on Tuesday, August 25. If you did not order a lunch ticket for your child with registration, please send the order in on Monday the 24th. This will allow time to process the order.

Activity Fees Have Changed:

The activity fees for students participating in extracurricular activities have increased from \$35 to \$75. This increased fee schedule allowed us to keep our 6th grade athletic programs in place, as well as jazz band. However, this additional fee does not cover the cost of activity bus transportation. There will be NO BAND/CHOIR/ACTIVITY BUSES.